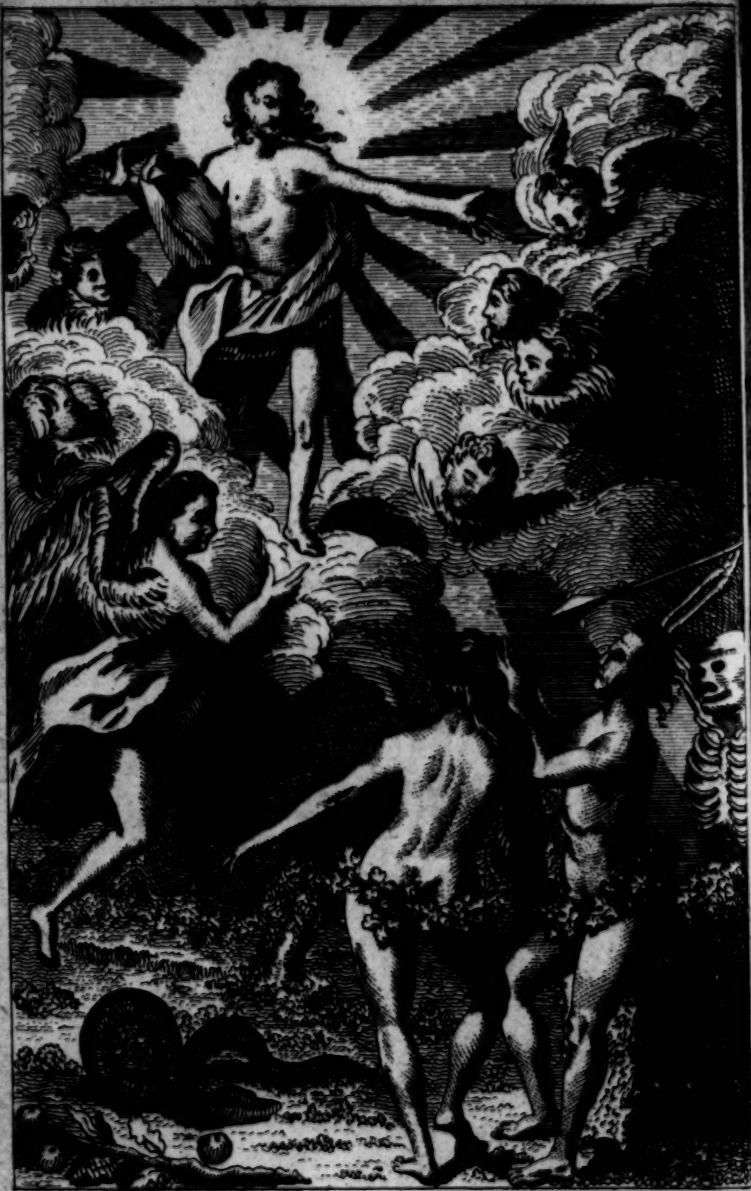


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PARADISE REGAIN'D.







PARADISE REGAIN'D.

A

P O E M,

I N

F O U R B O O K S.

THE AUTHOR

J O H N M I L T O N.

— K

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Paradise Regain'd.

B O O K I.

I Who ere while the happy garden sung,
 By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
 Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
 By one man's firm obedience fully try'd
 Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
 In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
 And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Spi'rit who ledst this glorious eremite
 Into the desert, his victorious field,
 Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him
 thence

6 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute,
And bear through height or depth of nature's
bounds

With prosp'rous wing full summ'd, to tell of
deeds

Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age
Worthy t' have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cry'd
Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at
hand

To all baptiz'd : to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them
came

From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown ; but him the Baptist soon
Descry'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 7

As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heav'nly office, nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd : on him baptiz'd
Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a dove
The Spi'rit descended, while the Father's voice
From heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly fam'd
Would not be last, and with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
With wonder, then with envy fraught and rage
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summon all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory ; and them amidst
With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

O ancient Pow'rs of air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,

8 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

Our hated habitation ; well ye know
How many ages as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of earth,
Since Adam and his facil consort Eve
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head : long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short ;
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein
we

Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd
wound,

At least if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being,
In this fair empire won of earth and air ;
For this ill news I bring, the woman's seed
Destin'd to this, is late of woman born :
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 9

But his growth now to youth's full flow'r,
displaying

All virtue, grace, and wisdom to atchieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream,
Pretends to wash off Sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honor as their king ; all come,
And he himself among them was baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony' of Heav'n, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt ; I saw
The prophet do him reverence, on him rising
Out of the water, Heav'n above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors, thence on his head
A perfect dove descend, whate'er it meant,
And out of Heav'n the sovereign voice I
heard,

This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.

10 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

His mother then is mortal, but his sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven,
And what will he not do to' advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the' deep ;
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven
 snares,

Ere in the head of nations he appear
Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and th' exploit perform'd
Successfully ; a calmer voyage now
Will waft me ; and the way found prosp'rous
 once
Induces best to hope of like success.

I. Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. II

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to th' infernal crew,
Distracted and surpriz'd with deep dismay
At these sad tidings ; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief :
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprize
To him their great dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents and potentates, and kings, yea Gods
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs.
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new declar'd,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try ;
So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
To end his reign on earth so long enjoy'd :
But contrary unwitting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd counsel pre-ordain'd and fix'd

12 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

Of the most High, who in full frequency bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.

Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all Angels conversant on earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son
Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God ;
Then toldst her doubting how these things
could be

To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the pow'r of the Highest
O'er-shadow her : this man born and now
up-grown,

To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan ; let him tempt and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy ; he might have learnt

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 13

Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean
To exercise him in the wilderness,
There shall he first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
By humiliation and strong sufferance :
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh ;
That all the Angels and ethereal Powers,
They now, and men hereafter, may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men.

14 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

So spake th' eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory' and triumph to the Son of God
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
The father knows the Son ; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untry'd,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate all ye stratagems of Hell,
And devilish machinations come to nought.

So they in Heav'n their odes and vigils tun'd :
Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,
Musing and much revolving in his breast,
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 15

Publish his God-like office now mature.

One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude, till far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step
 led on,

He enter'd now the bord'ring desert wild,
And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
His holy meditations thus pursu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd !
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good ; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things ; therefore above my years,
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew

16 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

To such perfection, that ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their
own ;

And was admir'd by all : yet this not all
To which my spi'rit aspir'd ; victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd :
Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly first
By willing words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear ;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul
Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware
Mistled ; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon
perceiving
By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,

I. Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 17

And said to me apart, High are thy thoughts
O Son, but nourish them and let them soar
To what height sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high ;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man ;
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy father is th' eternal King who rules
All Heav'n and Earth, Angels, and Sons of
men :

A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceiv'd in me a virgin, he foretold
Thou should'st be great and sit on David's
throne,

And of thy kingdom there shall be no end.

At thy nativity a glorious quire
Of Angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung
To shepherds watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born
Where they might see him, and to thee they
came,

Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,

18 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

For in the inn was left no better room :
A star, not seen before, in Heav'n appearing
Guided the wise men thither from the east,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,
By whose bright course led on they found the
place,

Affirming it thy star new grav'n in Heaven,
By which they knew the king of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warn'd
By vision, found thee in the temple', and spake
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.
This having heard, strait I again resolv'd
The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they
spake

I am ; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay e'vn to the death,
Ere I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 19

Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefix'd I waited, when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to
come

Before Messiah and his way prepare.

I as all others to his baptism came

Which I believ'd was from above ; but he
Strait knew me, and with loudest voice
proclaim'd

Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven)

Me him whose harbinger he was ; and first
Refus'd on me his baptism to confer.

As much his greater, and was hardly won :

But as I rose out of the laving stream,

Heav'n open'd her eternal doors, from whence

The Spi'rit descended on me like a dove,

And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,

Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronoun'd me his,

Me his beloved Son, in whom alone

He was well pleas'd ; by which I knew the time

Now full, that I no more shall live obscure,

But openly begin, as best becomes
 Th' authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.
 And now by some strong motion I am led
 Into this wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know ;
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our Morning Star then in his rise,
 And looking round on every side beheld
 A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades ;
 The way he came not having mark'd, return
 Was difficult, by human steps untrod ;
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
 Accompanied of things past and to come
 Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
 Such solitude before choicest society.

Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
 Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
 Under the covert of some ancient oak,
 Or cedar, to defend him from the dew.
 Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd ;
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
 Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 21

Among wild beasts : they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.

But now an aged man in rural weeds
Following, as seem'd, in quest of some stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks together, which might serve
Against a winter's day when winds blow keen,
To warn him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to
this place

So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan ? for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcass, pin'd with hunger and with drought.
I ask thee rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God ; I saw and heard, for we sometimes

22 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want,
come forth

To town or village nigh (nighest is far)
Where ought we hear, and curious are to hear
What happens new ; fame also finds us out.

To whom the Son of God. Who brought
me hither,
Will bring me hence ; no other guide I seek.

By miracle he may, reply'd the swain,
What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the camel †, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born ;
But if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee
bread,
So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

† It is commonly said that camels will go without
water three or four days.

He ended, and the Son of God reply'd.
Think'st thou such force in bread ? is it not
written

(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
Our fathers here with Manna ? in the mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank ;
And forty days Elijah without food
Wander'd this barren waste ; the same I now :
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art ;

Whom thus answer'd th' Arch-Fiend now
undisguis'd.

'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
Kept not my happy station, but was driven
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous prison I enjoy

24 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book I.

Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in th' air, nor from the Heav'n of
Heav'ns

Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;
And when to all his Angels he propos'd
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flatt'ring prophets glibb'd with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge,
For what he bids I do : though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent

Book I. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 25

Thy wisdom, and behold thy Godlike deeds ?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind : why should I ? they to me
Never did wrong or violence ; by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them
dwell

Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer ; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.

Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.

At first it may be ; but long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens ought each man's peculiar load,
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd ;
This wounds me most (what can it less ?) that
man,

Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd,
 Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
 From the beginning, and in lies wilt end ;
 Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to
 come

Into the Heav'n of Heav'n's : thou com'st
 indeed,

As a poor miserable captive thrall
 Comes to the place where he before had sat
 Among the prime in splendor, now depos'd,
 Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
 A spectacle of ruin or of scorn

To all the host of Heav'n : the happy place
 Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
 Rather inflames thy torment, representing
 Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
 So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.

But thou art serviceable to Heav'n's King.

Wilt thou impute t' obedience what thy fear
 Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites ?

What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
 Of righteous Job, then cruelly to' afflict him

With all afflictions ? but his patience won.
 The other service was thy chosen task,
 To be a liar in four hundred mouths ;
 For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
 Yet thou pretend'st to truth ; all oracles
 By thee are giv'n, and what confess'd more true
 Among the nations ? that hath been thy craft,
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
 But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
 Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
 Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
 And not well understood as good not known ?
 Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
 Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
 To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare ?
 For God hath justly giv'n the nations up
 To thy delusions ; justly, since they fell
 Idolatrous ; but when his purpose is
 Among them to declare his providence
 To thee not known, whence hast thou then
 thy truth,

But from him or his Angels president
 In every province? who themselves disdaining
 T' approach thy temples, give thee in command
 What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say
 To thy adorers; thou with trembling fear,
 Or like a fawning parasite obey'st;
 Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
 The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceas'd,
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
 Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or elsewhere,
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 God hath now sent his living oracle
 Into the world to teach his final will,
 And sends his Spi'rit of truth henceforth to
 dwell
 In pious hearts, an inward oracle
 To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
 Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
 But misery hath wrested from me : where
 Easily canst thou find one miserable
 And not enforc'd oft-times to part from truth ;
 If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
 Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure ;
 But thou art plac'd above me, thou art Lord ;
 From thee I can and must submit indure
 Check or reproof, and glad to 'scape so quit.
 Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk
 Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to
 th' ear

And tunable as sylvan pipe or song ;
 What wonder then if I delight to hear
 Her dictates from thy mouth ? most men admire
 Virtue, who follow not her lore : permit me
 To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
 And talk at least, though I despair to' attain.
 Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,
 Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest

To tread his sacred courts and minister
 About his altar, handling holy things,
 Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice
 To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
 Inspir'd ; disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.
 Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
 I bid not or forbid ; do as thou find'st
 Permission from above ; thou canst not more.

He added not ; and Satan bowing low
 His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
 Into thin air diffus'd : for now began
 Night with her fullen wings to double-shade
 The desert : fowls in their clay nests were
 couch'd ;
 And now wild beasts came forth the woods to
 roam.

The END of the FIRST BOOK.

Paradise Regain'd.

B O O K II.

MEAN while the new baptiz'd, who yet
remain'd

At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
And on that high authority had believ'd,
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd, &
mean

Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others though in holy writ not nam'd,
Now missing him their joy so lately found,
So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt:
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once

32 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Moses was in the mount, and missing long ;
 And the great Thibite†, who on fiery wheels
 Rode up to Heav'n, yet once again to come.
 Therefore as those young prophets then with
 care

Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
 Nigh to Bethabara ; in Jericho
 The city' of Palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
 Macærus, and each town or city wall'd
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
 Or in Peræa ; but return'd in vain.

Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
 Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring
 play,

Plain fishermen, no greater men them call,
 Close in a cottage low together got,
 Their unexpected loss and complaints out breath'd.

Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
 Unlook'd for are we fall'n ! our eyes beheld
 Messiah certainly now come, so long

† Elijah, a native of Thibse, a city of the country
 of Gilead, beyond Jordan.

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 33

Expected of our fathers : we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth ;
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd :
Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze :
For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us ? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation ? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come ;
Behold the King of th' earth how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what height their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee ; arise and vindicate
Thy glory, free thy people from their yoke.
But let us wait ; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have convers'd ;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence ; he will not fail,

34 PARADISE REGAIN'D Book II.

Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him
hence ;

Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their complaints new hope
resume

To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast
though pure,

Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus
elad.

O what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute
Hail highly favor'd, among women blest !
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore,

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 35

In such a season born when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air ; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his ; yet soon entorc'd to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing
fill'd

With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem ;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years ; his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king, but now
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shown.
Son own'd from Heav'n by his Father's voice ;
I look'd for some great change ; to honour? no,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce ; this is my favour'd lot,
May exaltation to afflictions high ;

36 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest ;
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.
 But where delays he now ? some great intent
 Conceals him : when twelve years he scarce
 had seen

I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
 He could not lose himself ; but went about
 His Father's business ; what he meant I mus'd,
 Since understand ; much more his absence now
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
 But I to wait with patience am inur'd ;
 My heart hath been a store-house long of things
 And say'ings laid up, portending strange events.

Thus Mary pond'ring oft, and oft to mind
 Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
 Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
 Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling ;
 The while her son tracing the desert wild,
 Sole but with holiest meditations fed,
 Into himself descended, and at once
 All his great work to come before him set ;
 How to begin how to accomplish best

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 37

His end of being on earth, and mission high :
For Satan with sly preface to return
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat ;
There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank he thus began.

Princes, Heav'n's antient Sons, ethereal
Thrones,

Demonian Spirits now, from th' element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
Pow'rs of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,
So may we hold our place, and these mild seats
Without new trouble ; such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell ;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequency was impower'd,
Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but
find

Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam first of Men,

38 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
However to this man inferior far,
If he be man by mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from Heav'n
adorn'd.

Perfections absolute, graces divine,
An amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here ; I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand
Or council to assist ; lest I who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So spake th' old Serpent doubting, and from
all

With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid
At his command ; when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissoluteſt Spi'rit that fell,
The sensualleſt, and after Asmodai
The fleshlieſt Incubus, and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the faireſt found ;

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 39

Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky ; more like to Goddeses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, inchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the pow'r to soften and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Woman, when nothing else, beguild'd the
heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow to the Gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself ; because of old

40 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
 Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
 None are, thou think'st, but taken with such
 toys.

Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
 False titled sons of God, roaming the earth
 Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
 And coupled with them, and begot a race.
 Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
 In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
 In wood or grove by mossy fountain side,
 In valley or green meadow, to way-lay
 Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
 Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
 Or Aymone, Syrinx, many more
 Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names
 ador'd,

Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan
 Satir, or Faun, or Sylvan? but these haunts
 Delight not all; among the sons of men
 How many have with a smile made small account
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 41

All her assaults, on worthier things intent ?
Remember that Pellean § conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the east
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd ;
How he firnam'd of Africa* dismiss'd
In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
Of honor, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state ;
Thence to the bait of woman lay expos'd :
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on th' accomplishment
Of greatest things ; what woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire ? or should the confident,

§ Alexander the Great, who was born at Pella in Macedonia : and his continence and clemency to Darius's queen and daughters are commended by the Historians.

* The continence of Scipio Africanus at the age of twenty-four, and his generosity in restoring a Spanish lady to her husband and friends, are celebrated by Polybius, Lib. 10.

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 43

No' advantage, and his strength as oft assay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud
acclaim,

Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part ;
Then to the desert takes with these his flight ;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungry first, and to himself thus said.

Where will this end ? four times ten days

I've pass'd

Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite : that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here ; if nature need not,
Or God support nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to indure ?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares

44 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Nature hath need of what she asks ; yet God
 Can satisfy that need some other way,
 Though hunger still remain : so it remain
 Without this body's wasting, I content me,
 And from the sting of famine fear no harm,
 Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
 Me hung'ring more to do my Father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
 Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
 Under the hospitable covert nigh
 Of trees thick interwoven ; there he slept,
 And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
 Of meats and drinks, natures refreshment
 sweet ;

Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
 And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
 Food to Elijah bringing ev'n and morn.

Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what
 they brought :

He saw the prophet also how he fled
 Into the desert, and how there he slept
 Under a juniper ; then how awak'd,
 He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 45

And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days ;
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark
Left his ground nest, high tow'ring to descry
The morn's approach, and greet her with his
song :

As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote or herd ;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
Only' in a bottom saw a pleasant grove ;
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud ;
Thither he bent his way ; determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
High roost, and walks beneath, and alleys
brown,

That open'd in the mid'st a woody scene ;

46 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Nature's own work it seem'd (nature taught
art)

And to a superstitious eye the haunt
Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs ; he view'd
it round,

When suddedly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city', or court, or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him
address'd.

With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide
Of all things destitute, and well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;
The fugitive bond-woman * with her son
Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing Angel ; all the race
Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God

* Hagar, who fled from the face of her mistress,
Gen. XVI. 6, and is therefore called a fugitive.

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 47

Rain'd from Heav'n Manna ; and that Prophet
bold

Native of Thebez wandring here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat :
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.

To whom thus Jesus. What conclud'st
thou hence ?

They all had need, as I thou see'st have none.

How hast thou hunger then ? Satan reply'd.
Tell me if food were now before thee set,
Would'st thou not eat ? Thereafter as I like
The Giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
Cause thy refusal ? said the subtle Fiend.
Hast thou not right to all created things ?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their pow'r ? nor mention I
Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd first
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse ;
Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who

48 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Would scruple that, with want oppress'd?

Behold

Nature asham'd, or better to express,

Troubled that thou should'st hunger, hath
purvey'd

From all the elements her choicest store

To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord

With honor, only deign to sit and eat.

He spake no dream, for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld

In ample space under the broadest shade

A table richly spread in regal mode,

With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort

And favor, beasts of chase, or fowl of game

In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,

Gris amber-steam'd; all fish from sea or shore,

Freshet, or purling brook, of shell or fin,

And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd

Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.

Alas, how simple to these cates compar'd,

Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!

And at a stately side-board by the wine

That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood

Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas §; distant more
Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn
stood

Nymph's of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flow'rs from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
Fair than feign'd of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore:
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes, and
winds

Of gentlest gale Arabian odors fann'd
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest
smells.

Such was the splendor, and the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd.

§ These were two beautiful youths and lov'd,
the one by Jupiter, the other by Hercules. Ganymed
was cup-bearer to Jupiter, and Hylas drew water
for Hercules, and therefore are properly mention'd
on this occasion.

50 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

What doubts the Son of God to fit and eat ?
 These are not fruits forbidden ; no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure :
 Their taste no knowledge works at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
 All these are Spi'rits of air, and woods, and
 springs,
 Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
 Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their
 Lord ;
 What doubt'st thou Son of God ? sit down
 and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temp'rately reply'd.
 Said'st thou not that to all things I had right ?
 And who witholds my pow'r that right to use ?
 Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
 When and where likes me best, I can command ?
 I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
 Command a table in this wilderness,
 And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
 Array'd in glory on my cup to' attend :

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 51

Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles.

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent,
That I have also pow'r to give thou see'st;
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose,
Whose pains have earn'd the far fet spoil.

With that

Both table and provision vanish quite
With sound of harpies wings, and talons heard;
Only the imp'rtune Tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;

52 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

Thy temperance invincible besides,
 For no allurements yields to appetite,
 And all thy heart is set on high designs,
 High actions ; but wherewith to be achiev'd ?
 Great acts require great means of enterprise ;
 Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
 A carpenter thy father known, thyself
 Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
 Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit :

Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
 To greatness ? whence authority deriv'd ?
 What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
 Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost ?
 Money brings honor, friends, conquest, and
 realms :

What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
 And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,
 (Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant
 friends ?

Therefore, if at great things thou wouldest
 arrive,

Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,

Not difficult, if thou hearken to me ;
 Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand ;
 They whom I favor thrive in wealth amain,
 While virtue, valor, wisdom sit in want.

To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd.
 Yet wealth without these three is impotent
 To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
 Witness those antient empires of the earth,
 In heighth of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd ;
 But men indued with these have oft attain'd
 In lowest poverty to highest deeds ;
 Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
 Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
 So many ages, and shall yet regain
 That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
 Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world
 To me is not unknown what hath been done
 Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
 Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus ?
 For I esteem those names of men so poor
 Who could do mighty things, and could
 contemn
 Riches though offer'd from the hand of kings.

54 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book II.

And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance if not snare, more apt
To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do ought may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms; yet not for that a crown,
Golden in shew, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless
 nights
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honor, virtue, merit and chief praise,
That for the public all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;
Which every wise and virtuous man attains:
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or head-strong multitudes,

Book II. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 55

Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright
Is yet more kingly ; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part ;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.
Besides to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be fought,
To gain a scepter, ofttest better miss'd.

The END of the SECOND BOOK,

Paradise Regain'd.

B O O K III.

SO spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
 A while as mute confounded what to say,
 What to reply, confuted and convinc'd
 Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift ;
 At length collecting all his serpent wiles,
 With soothing words renew'd, him thus accost.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
 What best to say canst say, to do canst do ;
 Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
 To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
 Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
 Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
 Thy counsel would be as the oracle
 Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
 On Aaron's breast ; or tongue of seers old
 Infallible : Or wert thou sought to deeds

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 57

That might require th' array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battel, though against thy few in arms.
These God-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spi'rits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and pow'rs all but the highest?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quell'd
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires

58 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious § : but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The peoples praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth
the praise ?

They praise, and they admire they know not
what,

And know not whom, but as one leads the other ;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk ;

§ Alluding to a story related of Julius Cæsar, that one day reading the story of Alexander, he sat awhile very thoughtful, and at last burst into tears, and his friends wond'ring at the reason of it, do you not think, said he, I have just cause to weep, when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquered so many nations, and I have all this time done nothing that is memorable.

Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise ?

His lot who dares be singularly good.

Th' intelligent among them and the wise

Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.

This is true glory and renown, when God

Looking on th' earth, with approbation marks

The just man, and divulges him through Heav'n

To all his Angels, who with true applause

Recount his praises : thus he did to Job,

When to extend his fame through Heav'n and

Earth,

As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,

He ask'd thee, Hast thou seen my servant Job ?

Famous he was in Heav'n, on Earth less known ;

Where glory is false glory, attributed

To things not glorious, men not worthy' of fame.

They err who count it glorious to subdue

By conquest far and wide, to over-run

Large countries, and in fields great battels win,

Great cities by assault : what do these worthies,

But rob, and spoil, burn, slaughter, and inflave

Peaceable nations, neighb'ring, or remote,

Made captive, yet deserving freedom more

60 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipt with temple, priest and sacrifice ;
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other ;
Till conqu'ror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory ought of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd
Without ambition, war, or violence ;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance : I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs with faintly patience
borne

Made famous in a land and times obscure :
Who names not now with honor patient Job ?
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable ?)
By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death, unjust, lives
now

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 61

Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.

Yet if for fame and glory ought be done,
Ought suffer'd ; if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punic rage,
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
Oft not deserv'd ? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.

To whom the Tempter murr'ring thus
reply'd.

Think not so slight of glory ; therein least
Resembling thy great Father : he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs ; nor content in Heaven
By all his Angels glorify'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption ;
Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
Glory he requires, and glory he receives
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd ;

62 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

From us his foes pronounc'd glory' he exacts.

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.
 And reason ; since his word all things produc'd
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
 But to shew forth his goodness, and impart
 His good communicable to every soul
 Freely ; of whom what could he less expect
 Than glory and benediction, that is thanks,
 The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
 From them who could return him nothing else,
 And not returning that would likeliest render
 Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy ?
 Hard recompense, unsuitable return
 For so much good, so much beneficence.
 But why should man seek glory, who of his own
 Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
 But condemnation. ignominy', and shame ?
 Who for so many benefits receiv'd
 Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
 And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
 Yet sacrilegious to himself would take
 That which to God alone of right belongs ;
 Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 63

That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.

So spake the Son of God ; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin, for he himself
Insatiable of glory had left all,
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass :
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne ;
By mother's side thy father ; though thy right
Be now in pow'rful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms :
Judæa now and all the promis'd land,
Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius ; nor is always rul'd
With temp'rate sway ; oft have they violated
The temple, oft the law with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus : and think'st thou to regain
Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring ?

So did not Maccabeus ; he indeed
 Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms ;
 And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
 That by strong hand his family obtain'd,
 Though priests, the crown, and David's throne
 usurp'd,

With Modin and her suburbs once content.
 If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
 And duty ; zeal and duty are not flow ;
 But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.
 They themselves rather are occasion best,
 Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
 Thy country from her Heathen servitude ;
 So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
 The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign ;
 The happier reign the sooner it begins ;
 Reign then ; what canst thou better do the while ?

To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
 All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
 And time there is for all things, Truth hath said ;
 If of my reign prophetic Writ hath told
 That it shall never end, so when begin
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed,

I. Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 65

He in whose hand all times and seasons roll,
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey ? who best
Can suffer, best can do ; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd ; just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition ?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction ?

To whom the Tempter inly rack'd reply'd.
Let that come when it comes ; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace ; what worse ?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear :
If there be worse, the expectation more

66 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III,

Of worſe torments me than the feeling can.

I would be at the worſt ; worſt is my port,

My harbour and my ultimate reſoſe,

The end I would attain, my final good.

My error was my error, and my crime

My crime ; whatever for itſelf condemn'd,

And will alike be puniſh'd, whether thou

Reign or reign not ; though to that gentle brow

Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,

From that placid aſpect and meek regard,

Rather than aggravate my evil ſtate,

Would ſtand between me and thy Father's ire

(Whoſe ire I dread more than the fire of Hell)

A ſhelter and a kind of ſhading cool

Interpoſition, as a ſummer's cloud.

If I then to the worſt that can be haſte,

Why move thy feet ſo ſlow to what is beſt,

Happieſt both to thyſelf and all the world,

That thou who wortheſt art ſhould'ſt be their
king ?

Perhaps thou linger'ſt in deep thoughts detain'd

Of th' enterpriſe ſo hazardous and high ;

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 67

No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, fews days
Short sojourn; and what thence could'st thou
observe?

The world thou hast not seen, much less her
glory,

Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.

The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever
Timorous and loath, with novice modesty,
(As he † who seeking asses found a kingdom)

Irrésolute, unhardy, unadventrous:

But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes

* Saul, who seeking his father's lost asses came to Samuel, and by him was anointed King. The story is related 1 Sam. IX.

68 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

The monarchies of th' earth, their pomp and
state,

Sufficient introduction to inform

Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,

And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know

How best their opposition to withstand.

With that (such pow'r was giv'n him then)
he took

The Son of God up to a mountain high.

It was a mountain at whose verdant feet

A spacious plain out-stretch'd in circuit wide

Lay pleasant ; from his side two rivers flow'd,

Th' one winding, th' other strait, and left
between

Fair champain with less rivers interven'd,

Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea :

Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine ;

With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks
the hills ;

Huge cities and high towr'd, that well might
seem

The seats of mightiest monarchs, and so large

The prospect was, that here and there was room

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 69

For barren desert fountainless and dry.

To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st
Assyria and her empire's ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,
And inaccessible th' Arabian drouth:
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis
His city there thou seest, and Baetra there

Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
 And Hecatompylos her hundred gates ;
 There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
 The drink of none but kings ; of later fame
 Built by Emathian, or by Parthian hands,
 The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
 Artaxata, Taredon, Ctesiphon,
 Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.
 All these the Parthian, now some ages past,
 By great Arfaces led, who founded first
 That empire, under his dominion holds,
 From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
 And just in time thou com'st to have a view
 Of his great pow'r, ; for now the Parthian king
 In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host
 Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
 Have wasted Sogdiana ; to her aid
 He marches now in haste ; see, though from far,
 His thousands, in what martial equipage
 They issue forth, steel bows, and shafts their
 arms
 Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit ;
 All horsemen, in which fight they most excel ;

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 71

See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs and wedges, and half-moons and
wings.

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-pour'd, light armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride ;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Praising their riders bore, the flow'r and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound ;
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
From Atropatia and the neighb'ring plains
Of Adiabene, Media and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
He saw them in their forms of battel rang'd,
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them
shot
sharp fleet of arrowy flow'rs against the face
of their pursuers, and overcame by flight ;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown :
nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn

72 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
 Chariots or elephants indors'd with towers
 Of archers, nor of lab'ring pioneers
 A multitude with spades and axes arm'd
 To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
 Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
 With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke ;
 Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
 And waggons fraught with utensils of war.
 Such forces met not, ‡ nor so wide a camp,
 When Agrican with all his northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
 The city' of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
 The fairest of her sex Angelica
 His daughter, fought by many prowest knights,
 Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
 Such and so numerous was their chivalry ;
 At sight whereof the fiend yet more presum'd,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

‡ What Milton here alludes to, is related in Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato, L. i. Canto x. where the number of forces which Agrican the Tartar king brings into the field, is said to be no less than two million two hundred thousand.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety ; hear, and
mark

To what end I have brought thee hither and
shown

All this fair sight ; thy kingdom though foretold
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavour as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain ; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means,
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposit,
Samaritan or Jew ; how could'st thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
Between two such inclosing enemies
Roman and Parthian ? therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first
By my advice, as nearer, and of late

74 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

Found able by invasion to annoy
 Thy country', and captive lead away her kings
 Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,
 Maugre the Roman : it shall be my task
 To render thee the Parthian at dispose ;
 Choose which thou wilt by conquest or by league.
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee
 In David's royal seat, his true successor,
 Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten tribes
 Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
 In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd ;
 Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph lost
 'Thus long from Israel, serving as of old
 Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver.
 These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
 From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond
 Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear.

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 75

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
And fragil arms, much instrument of war
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou' hast set, and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battels and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth nought.
Means I must use thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict and fail me of the throne :
My time I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come ;
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part ought endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full scepter sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons ;

76 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book III.

But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
 For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
 When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
 Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives
 Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
 By three days pestilence ? such was thy zeal
 To Israel then, the same that now to me.
 As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
 Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
 From God to worship calves, the deities
 Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
 And all the idolatries of Heathen round,
 Besides their other worse than heath'nish crimes;
 Nor in the land of their captivity
 Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
 The God of their forefathers ; but so dy'd
 Impenitent, and left a race behind
 Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
 From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,
 And God with idols in their worship join'd.
 Should I of these the liberty regard,

Book III. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 77

Who freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow' ; and to their Gods
perhaps

Of Bethel and of Dan ? no, let them serve
Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
Remembring Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave th' Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the promis'd land their fathers pass'd ;
To his due time and providence I leave them.

So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falshood contends.

The END of the THIRD BOOK.

Paradise Regain'd.

B O O K IV.

PErplex'd and troubled at his bad success
 The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
 So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
 That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
 So little here, nay lost ; but Eve was Eve,
 This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
 And rash, beforehand had no better weigh'd
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own :
 But as a man who had been matchless held
 Incunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,
 To salve his credit, and for very spite,
 Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
 And never cease, though to his shame the more ;
 Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
 About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
 Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound ;
 Or surging waves against a solid rock,

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 79

Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end ;
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desp'rate of success
And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills,
That screen'd the fruits of th' earth and seats
of men

From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With tow'rs and temples proudly elevate
On sev'n small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interpos'd ;

80 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

By what strange parallax or optic skill
Of vision multiply'd through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire :
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke.

The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the
earth

So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations ; there the capitol thou seest
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable, and there mount Palatine,
Th' imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets and terraces, and glitt'ring spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of God, (so well I have dispos'd
My airy microscope) thou may'st behold
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,
Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory or gold.
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 81

What conflux issuing forth, or entring in,
Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state ;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings :
Or embassies from regions far remote
In various habits on the Appian road
Or on th' Emilian, some from farthest south,
Syene', and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe Nilotic isle, and more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea ;
From th' Asian Kings and Parthian amongst these,
From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white filken turbants wreath'd ;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay,
To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,

82 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian; these two thrones except,
The rest are barb'rous, and scarce worth the
fight,

Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd ;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emperor hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
To Capreæ an island small but strong
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts lust in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked favorite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,
Hated of all, and hating ; with what ease,
Indued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his
throne

Now made a stye, and in his place ascending
A victor people free from servile yoke ?
And with my help thou may'st ; to me the power
Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 83

Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
Aim at the high'est, without the highest attain'd
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophecy'd what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind ; though thou should'st add
to tell

Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
(For I have also hear'd, perhaps have read)
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal and myrrhine cups imboss'd with gems
And studs of pearl, to me should'st tell who thirst
And hunger still : then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh ; what honor that,
But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries ? then proceed'st to talk
Of th' emperor, how easily subdued,

84 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

How gloriously ; I shall, thou say'st, expel
 A brutish monster : what if I withal
 Expel a Devil who first made him such ?
 Let his tormenter conscience find him out ;
 For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
 That people victor once, now vile and base
 Deservedly made vassal, who once just
 Frugal, and mild, and temp'rate, conquer'd well,
 But govern ill the nations under yoke,
 Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
 By lust and rapin ; first ambitious grown
 Of triumph, that insulting vanity ;
 Then cruel, by their sports to blood inur'd
 Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,
 Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still
 And from the daily scene effeminate.
 What wise and valiant man would seek to free
 These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free ?
 Know therefore when my season comes to sit
 On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
 Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
 Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash

All monarchies besides throughout the world,
And of my kingdom there shall be no end :
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the Tempter impudent reply'd.
I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valuest, because offer'd, and reject'st :
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict :
On th' other side know also thou, that I
Nor what I part with mean to give for nought ;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st
The kingdoms of the world to thee I give ;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
No trifle ; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior lord,
Easily done, and hold them all of me ;
For what can less so great a gift deserve ?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain.
I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter

86 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

Th' abominable terms, impious condition ;
But I indure the time, till which expir'd,
Thou hast permission on me. It is written.
The first of all commandments, Thou shalt
worship

The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve ;
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurs'd, now more accurs'd
For this attempt bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous ? which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given,
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd ;
Other donation none thou canst produce :
If giv'n, by whom but by the king of kings,
God over all supreme ? if giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the giver now
Repaid ? But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me the Son of God,
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God ?
Get thee behind me ; plain thou now appear'st
That evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 87

To whom the Fiend with fear abash'd reply'd.
Be not so sore offended, Son of God.
Though sons of God both Angels are and Men,
If I to try whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
What both from Men and Angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
Nations besides from all the quartered winds,
God of this world invok'd and world beneath;
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me so fatal, me it most concerns.
The trial hath indamag'd thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem;
Menought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
Advise thee? gain them as thou canst, or not.
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judg'd,
When slipping from thy mother's eye thou
went'st

38 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

Alone into the Temple ; there wast found
Among the graveſt Rabbies diſputant
On points and queſtions fitting Moſes chair, †
Teaching not taught ; the childhood ſhows the
Man,

As morning ſhows the day. Be famous then
By wiſdom ; as thy empire muſt extend
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend :
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moſes Law,
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote ;
The Gentiles alſo know, and write and teach
To admiration, led by nature's light ;
And with the Gentiles much thou muſt converſe,
Ruling them by perſuaſion as thou mean'ſt ;
Without their learning how wilt thou with them,
Or thee with thee hold converſation meet ?
How wilt thou reaſon with them how refute
Their idolifms, traditions, paradoxes ?
Error by his own arms is beſt evinc'd.

† Moſes chair was that in which the docters fitting,
expounded the law, either publicly to the people, or
privately to their diſciples.

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 89

Look once more ere we leave this specular mount
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City' or suburban, studious walks and shades ;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird †
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long ;
There flowery hill Hymettus with the sound
Of bees industrious murmur oft invites
To studious musing ; there Ilissus rolls
His whisp'ring stream : within the walls then
view

The schools of ancient sages ; his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next :
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony in tones and numbers hit

† The nightingale, for Philomela who according to the fable was changed into a nightingale, was the daughter of Pardion King of Athens.

90 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.
By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them birth, but higher sung,
Blind Melesignes thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life ;
High actions, and high passions best describing :
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
Shook th' arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece,
To Macedon and Artaxerxes throne :
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heav'n descended to the low-rooft house
Of Socrates ; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd,
Wiseſt of men ; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 91

Sirnam'd Peripatetics, and the sect

Epicurean, and the Stoic severe ;

These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,

Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight ;

These rules will render thee a king complete

Within thyself, much more with empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour sagely thus reply'd.

Think not but that I know these things, or think

I know them not ; not therefore am I short

Of knowing what I ought : he who receives

Light from above, from the fountain of light,

No other doctrin needs, though granted true ;

But these are false, or little else but dreams,

Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.

The first and wisest of them all profess'd

To know this only, that he nothing knew ;

The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits ;

A third sort doubted all things, though plain

sense ;

Others in virtue plac'd felicity,

But virtue join'd with riches and long life ;

In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease ;

92 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

The Stoic last in philosophic pride,
By him call'd virtue ; and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Of subtle shifts conviction to evade.

Alas what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending ?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome ; who reads

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 93

Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere
seek ?)

Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge ;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace ? All our law and story strow'd
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms
inscrib'd,

Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,
That pleas'd so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd ;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their Deities, and their own
In fable, hymn or song, so personating
Their Gods ridiculous, and themselves past
shame.

Remove their swelling epithets thick laid
 As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest
 Thin sown with ought of profit or delight,
 Will far be found unworthy to compare
 With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
 Where God is prais'd aright, and God-like men,
 The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints ;
 Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee,
 Unless where moral virtue is express'd
 By light of nature not in all quite lost.
 Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
 The top of eloquence, statists indeed,
 And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
 But herein to our prophets far beneath,
 As men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of civil government
 In their majestic unaffected stile
 Than all the' oratory of Greece and Rome.
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a nation happy', and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat ;
 These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God ; but Satan now
Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow reply'd.

Since neither wealth, nor honor, arms nor
arts,

Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor ought
By me propos'd in life contemplative,
Or active, tended on by glory' or fame,
What dost thou in this world ? the wilderness
For thee is fittest place ; I found thee there,
And thither will return thee ; yet remember
What I foretel thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected thus
Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
Now contrary, if I read ought in Heaven,
Or Heav'n write ought of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,

96 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows, and labors, opposition, hate
Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death;
A kingdom they portend thee, but what
kingdom,

Real or allegoric I discern not,
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefix'd
Directs me in the starry rubric set.

So say'ing he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him
there,

Feigning to disappear. Darkneſs now roſe,
As day-light ſunk, and brought in louring night
Her ſhadowy offspring, unſubſtantial both,
Privation mere of light and abſent day.

Our Saviour meek and with untroubled mind
After his airy jaunt, though hurried ſore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his reſt,
Wherever, under ſome concurrence of ſhades,

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 97

Whose branching arms thick intertwin'd might
shield

From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,
But shelter'd slept in vain, for at his head

The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly
dreams

Disturb'd his sleep! and either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n, the
clouds

From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire
In ruin reconcil'd; nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer: ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken; nor yet stay'd the terror there,
Infernal ghosts, and Hellish furies, round

98 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd,
 some shriek'd,

Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
 Satst unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.

Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair
 Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray,
 Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
 Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
 And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd
 To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.

And now the sun with more effectual beams
 Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dry'd the wet
 From drooping plants, or dropping tree; the birds,
 Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
 After a night of storm so ruinous,

Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
 To gratulate the sweet return of morn;

Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
 Was absent, after all his mischief done,

The prince of darkness, glad would also seem
 Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,

Yet with no new device, they all were spent,
 Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 99

Desperate of better course, to vent his rage,
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said.

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the wrack
As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals
fear them

As dang'rous to the pillar'd frame of Heav'n,
Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholesome as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in th' affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore signify and threaten ill:
This tempest at this desert most was bent:

100. PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
 Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
 The perfect season offer'd with my aid
 To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
 All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
 Of gaining David's throne no man knows when,
 For both the when and how is no where told,
 Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
 For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
 The time and means: each act is rightliest done,
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
 What I foretold thee, many a hard assay,
 Of dangers and adversities, and pains,
 Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold;
 Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee
 round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies
 May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
 And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not ; other harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of, did me
none ;

I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatning nigh ; what they can do as signs
Betokening, or ill boding, I contemn

As false portents, not sent from God, but thee ;
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offer'd air, that I accepting
At least might seem to hold all pow'r of thee,
Ambitious Spi'rit, and wouldst be thought my
God,

And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will ; desist, thou art discern'd
And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the Fiend now swoln with rage
reply'd.

Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born ;
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt :
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the prophets ; of thy birth at length

Announc'd by Gabriel with the first I knew,
 And of th' angelic song in Bethlehem field,
 On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
 From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
 Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred ;
 Till at the ford of Jordan whither all
 Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest.
 Though not to be baptiz'd, by voice from Heaven
 Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
 Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer
 view

And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
 In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
 The Son of God, which bears no single sense ;
 The Son of God I also am, or was,
 And if I was, I am ; relation stands ;
 All men are Sons of God ; yet thee I thought
 In some resp^t & far higher so declar'd.
 Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
 And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild ;
 Whereby all best conjectures I collect
 Thou art to be my fatal enemy.

Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
 To understand my adversary, who
 And what he is ; his wisdom, pow'r, intent ;
 By parl, or composition, truce, or league
 To win him, or win from him what I can.
 An opportunity I here have had
 To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
 Proof against all temptation, as a rock
 Of adamant, and as a center, firm,
 To th' utmost of mere man both wise and good,
 Not more ; for honors, riches, kingdoms, glory
 Have been before contemn'd, and may again ;
 Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
 Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heaven,
 Another method I must now begin.

So say'ing he caught him up, and without wing
 Of hippogrif bore through the air sublime
 Over the wilderness and o'er the plain ;
 Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
 The holy city lifted high her towers,
 And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
 Her pile, far off appearing like a mount

Of alabaster, topt with golden spires :
 There on the highest pinnacle he set
 The Son of God, and added thus in scorn.

The stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
 Will ask thee skill ; I to thy father's house
 Have brought thee', and highest plac'd, highest
 is best,

Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
 Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God :
 For it is written, He will give command
 Concerning thee to his Angels, in their hands
 They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
 Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To whom thus Jesus ; Also it is written,
 Tempt not the Lord thy God : he said and stood ;
 But Satan smitten with amazement fell.
 As when earth's son Antæus (to compare
 Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
 With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,
 Receiving from his mother earth new strength,
 Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,

Throttled at length in th' air, expir'd and fell ;
 So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
 Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
 Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.

And as that Theban monster † that propos'd
 Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd,
 That once found out and solv'd, for grief and
 Spite

Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep ;
 So struck with dread and anguish fell the Fiend.
 And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
 Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,
 Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
 Who durst proudly tempt the Son of God.
 So Satan fell ; and strait a fiery globe
 Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
 Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
 From his uneasy station, and upbore
 As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
 Then in a flow'ry valley set him down

† The Sphinx, whose riddle being resolved by Oedipus, she threw herself into the sea.

On a green bank, and set before him spread
 A table of celestial food, divine
 Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
 And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
 That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
 What hunger, if ought hunger had impair'd,
 Or thirst; and as he fed, angelic quires
 Sung heav'nly anthems of his victory
 Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.

True Image of the Father, whether thron'd
 In the bosom of blifs, and light of light
 Conceiving, or remote from Heav'n, inshrin'd
 In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
 Wand'ring the wilderness, whatever place,
 Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
 The Son of God, with God-like force indued
 Against th' attempter of thy Father's throne,
 And thief of Paradise; him long of old
 Thou didst debel, and down from Heav'n cast
 With all his army, now thou hast aveng'd
 Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
 Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise;

Book IV. PARADISE REGAIN'D. 107

And frustrated the conquest fraudulent :
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt ; his snares are broke :
For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now .
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-install
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall
be,

Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal Serpent, shalt not long
Rule in the clouds ; like an autumnal star
Or lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n, trod
down

Under his feet : for proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest
wound,

By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph ; in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt ; hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God ; he all unarm'd
Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice

108 PARADISE REGAIN'D. Book IV.

From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy legions ; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail Son of the most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus the Son of God our Saviour meek
Sung victor, and from heav'nly feast refresh'd
Brought on his way with joy ; he unobserv'd
Home to his mother's house private return'd.

T H E E N D.

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